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Net drops Mars Hill Church, pastor

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Church-planting network Acts 29 has removed Mars Hill Church and its controversial pastor, Mark Driscoll, from its membership.



DRISCOLL

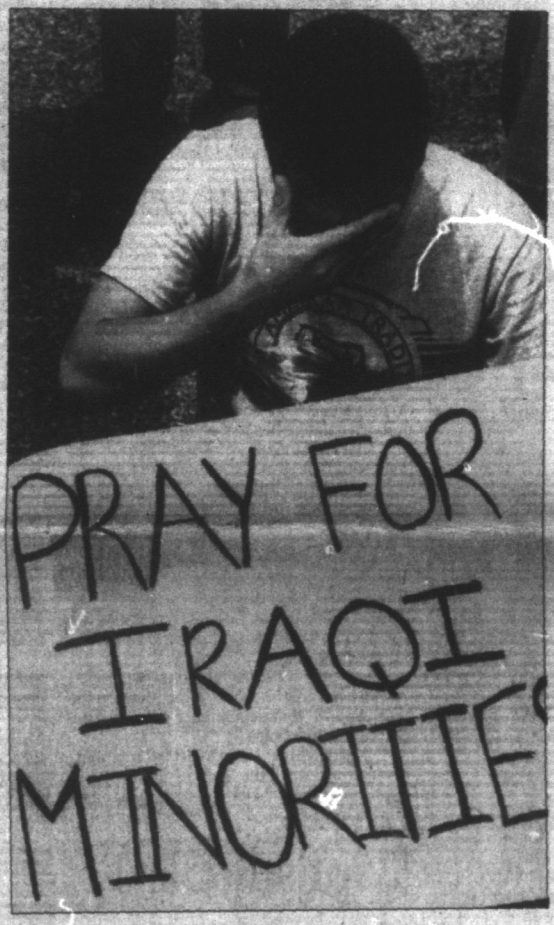
Driscoll, who started the Seattle church in 1996 and helped found Acts 29, has long been a polarizing figure due to his direct leadership style and his often crude speaking and writing manner. He has come under fire recently for inflammatory comments he made on the Internet 14 years ago under a pseudonym.

"It is with deep sorrow that the Acts 29 Network announces its decision to remove Mark Driscoll and Mars Hill Church from membership in the network," said a statement released by the Acts 29 board. "It is our conviction that the nature of the accusations against Mark, most of which have been confirmed by him, make it untenable and unhelpful to keep Mark and Mars Hill in our network."

Matt Chandler, pastor of The Village Church in Flower Mound, Texas, is president of Acts 29. The Village Church cooperates with the Southern Baptist Convention, and Chandler is a well-known speaker at Southern Baptist events. He assumed the presidency of Acts 29 in 2012, when Driscoll stepped down from the role.

Acts 29 counts 500 churches around the world as members. Many of them cooperate with the SBC, though the two organizations have disagreed over issues ranging from alcohol to Calvinism to Driscoll's demeanor.

Facing death for beliefs



PLEA FOR HELP — A Yazidi man breaks down in tears during a rally on August 7 at the White House in Washington, D.C., which called for American aid and military action in northern Iraq. More than 50,000 Christians and Yazidis, an ancient non-Christian religion based on Zoroastrianism, are reported to be trapped on a mountaintop in northern Iraq without food or water after being driven out of their homes in the city of Sinjar, which was seized by Islamic State militants. (IMB photo)

Islamic militants seeking to destroy Christians in Iraq

WASHINGTON, D.C. (BP and local reports) — As U.S. military forces launch airstrikes against Islamic militants in northern Iraq who are seeking to destroy Christians and other religious minorities, the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention and Baptist Global Response (BGR) are asking Southern Baptists to help provide humanitarian relief for tens of thousands of Iraqi Christians and Yazidi Kurds forced from their homes under threat of death.

Most pressing is a situation the White House calls a "looming humanitarian catastrophe" unfolding on a mountaintop near the Iraqi city of Sinjar, home to the country's Yazidi religious minority, where some 50,000 Christian and Yazidi refugees are trapped with limited food and water.

The Yazidi religion, which dates to the 12th century A.D., is non-Christian and based on Zoroastrianism. It is also syncretic with other Middle Eastern religions.

On Aug. 3, Sunni extremists known as Islamic State or ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) seized the city as Sinjar's Yazidi population fled fearing massacre. Many Iraqis without transportation escaped to the nearby Sinjar Mountains, a barren heap of rock where daytime temperatures can top 120 degrees.

While the U.S. and Great Britain have begun airdropping water, food, and other supplies to Yazidi refugees in the mountains, BGR representatives are focusing efforts on helping the reportedly 200,000 internally displaced Iraqi refugees who have fled ISIS militants' rapid advance. BGR is a primary ministry partner of IMB.

In June, ISIS took control of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, ordering thousands of Iraqi Christians to leave, convert to Islam, pay heavy taxes, or be executed. Yazidi Kurds and other Iraqi minorities have been forced from Sinjar and surrounding villages under threat of death. Many of the refugees have fled to Duhok and Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan, or south to Baghdad.

"The news coming out of Iraq is even more heart-breaking than usual," said Jeff Palmer, BGR's executive director. "We have been helping Iraqi families over the past few months but must now intensify our efforts due to this heightened conflict. We are grateful to have so many friends who care about people in need.

"Suffering Iraqis will have an opportunity to know God's love firsthand as our partners bring desperately needed relief."

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Persecution in our time

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.
– John 15:18 (NIV)

As it has been for two thousand years, so it is today. Christians are once again being starved and slaughtered for their faith. This time, like so many times in the past, radical Islamists – followers of the "Religion of Peace" – are bent on destroying any Christian who is unfortunate enough to fall within their grasp in northern Iraq.

News reports from the area indicate that Christians, as well as practitioners of other faiths, have already been put to the sword in high numbers. Little children who fall behind while trying to escape overrun villages have been beheaded. Elderly people are dying of starvation and dehydration in the Sinjar Mountains, surrounded and trapped while well-armed forces of ISIS pace like animals at the foot of the mountains awaiting any opportunity to inflict more sorrow on the refugees.

"Where is my mother?" cries a young girl as blood trickles down her face from underneath a dirty piece of cloth wrapped around her head. She is all alone in the Sinjar Mountains, awaiting her fate (cnn.com/2014/08/10/world/meast/iraq-isis-sinjar/).

It's impossible to make any sense of it. Not only are the Islamic extremists slaughtering Christians, Yazidis (who follow a syncretic form of Zoroastrianism and local beliefs), and other non-Muslim minorities, they're hunting down fellow Muslims who don't believe exactly as they do. News reports at press deadline describe women and young girls being torn from their families to provide sex for the brave warriors (all sarcasm intended).

We shouldn't be surprised. Jesus Himself predicted as much, but it's the lack of humanity and the level of savagery that shocks. From the first generation of Christians who served as feedstock for the Romans' lethal entertainment desires to the present generation being decapitated in the dust, such has been the fate of the followers of Jesus.

We Christians who are blessed to live in what is called the West really don't have a clue. We are truly the exception to the persecution of Christians for more than two millennia. While we rest comfortably each Sunday in the padded pews of our temperature-controlled worship centers, Chinese Christians shiver in the cold of their unheated secret meeting place.

While we anxiously rush to beat other church goers to the best restaurants for lunch — even slipping out of the worship service early — Christians in prison in Iran haven't eaten for days because of their "uncleanness" in the eyes of their Muslim captors. While our surplus of Bibles collect dust on an obscure bookshelf somewhere in our fine homes, Christians in North Korea yearn to touch a Bible *just once in their lives.*

We are a blessed people to be able to worship and praise and pray in freedom and openness, when so many of our brothers and sisters can't be sure they'll see one more day on this earth. Let us approach God with the holiness, soberness and gratitude that He expects and deserves. Let us pray without ceasing for those who are persecuted simply because they love Jesus.

After what He did for us, it's the least we can do for Him.

Abortions for Jesus?



Guest opinion
with Russell D. Moore

It is one of the most disturbing articles I've ever read. The current issue of Esquire magazine profiles the "abortion ministry" of Willie Parker, a doctor who flies in and out of my home state of Mississippi to perform abortions at the state's only abortion clinic in Jackson.

The word "ministry" isn't incidental. Parker says he aborts unborn children because Jesus wants him to.

Parker, the article says, preached in Baptist churches as a young man, before going into medicine. He had, he says, a "come to Jesus" moment where he became convinced that he ought to do abortions.

"The protesters say they're opposed to abortion because they're Christian," he says. "It's hard for them to accept that I do abortions because I'm a Christian."

The profile portrays Parker as he prepares women for the abortions he is selling them. He tells them to ignore everything but their own consciences and then, of course, he informs their consciences that abortion is morally acceptable.

"If you are comfortable with your decision, ignore everything from everybody else," he says.

Apparently, he knows how to ignore everything else, including the conscience. The article quotes him talking a woman through an abortion by telling her that her unborn child is "very small."

In the most chilling passage of the article, Parker has just aborted triplets and is sorting through the aftermath. He then points out to the reporter the body parts of a nine-week unborn child he has just aborted.

"There's the skull, what is going to be the fetal skull," he says. "And there are the eye sockets." Parker points out. "That's an eye."

The article states: "Floating near the top of the dish are two tiny arms with two tiny hands."

Parker says that he is not disturbed by these body parts because he is "not deluded about what this whole process is." It doesn't disturb him, he says, it just tells him the woman's uterus is empty and she's no longer pregnant.

He doesn't consider the "fetus" a person because the child is totally dependent on the mother, and "that dependence puts it in the domain of her choice."

Parker says his "come to Jesus" moment, persuading him of the "call" to abortion, happened when he heard a sermon by Martin Luther King Jr. on Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. By performing abortion, Parker sees himself as the Samaritan, caring for the beaten neighbor on the side of the road.

That would be true, of course, if the Samaritan in Jesus' story had euthanized the neighbor, to put him out of his misery. Of course, he didn't. Instead, the Samaritan took the neighbor on as his own kin, nursing him back to health and caring for him, a picture that looks a lot like what many of the pro-life churches and organizations Parker dismisses are, in fact, doing for women in crisis and their babies.

Ironically enough, the one left for dead on the side of the Jericho Road was also totally dependent. Without the embrace of love and the kindness of a passer-by, he was left for dead. He was hardly viable on his own.

The priest and the Levite passed on, King preached rightly, probably because they were afraid. Fear paralyzed them from seeing the humanity of another. The road to Jericho was filled with "choice," as person after person averted his eyes from the hurting human being in front of them.

The one on the roadside was dependent, totally dependent, on one who saw life as better than death.

Parker could be that Good Samaritan. Instead, he looks into the sonogram screen and says, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29).

Let's pray and work for an end to the injustice of abortion. Let's pray and work for better solutions for women in crisis. Let's pray for doctors like this as well.

We can pray for a "come to Jesus" moment that puts him on the right side of the Jericho Road.

Moore, a Biloxi native, is president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

THE BaptistRecord

Editor
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

Associate Editor
Tony Martin
tmartin@mbcb.org

Layout/Design
Megan Young
myoung@mbcb.org

Advertising
Emily Jones
ejones@mbcb.org

Circulation Manager
Brenda Quattlebaum
bquattlebaum@mbcb.org

Editor Emeritus
Don McGregor

Baptist Record Advisory Committee:
Dwayne Parker, Flora
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Postmaster:
Send changes of address to: The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

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Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: *baptistrecord@mbcb.org*

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The Great War: Baptists swing from opposition to acceptance

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — Though Southern Baptists didn't want America to enter the Great War when it broke out, they came to see it as a necessary fight to preserve liberty and morality, historians have noted at the war's 100th anniversary.

One scholar even added that America's victory may have helped inspire the Cooperative Program.

"Prior to America's entry into the war, there is a strong anti-war sentiment (among Southern Baptists) that 'we don't need to get involved,'" Bill Sumners, director of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, told Baptist Press.

However, when President Woodrow Wilson, "who was favored by Southerners and Southern Baptists," recommended that America enter the war, Baptists "pretty well supported him," Sumners said. "You find very little — though there's some — dissent about entry into the war. For the most part Southern Baptists rally to join the conflict."

In its final annual meeting before the war ended in late 1918, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) adopted a report from its Committee on World Crisis that deemed military conflict the only way to stop Germany from suppressing democracy.

If America's "entrance upon this vast enterprise had been dictated by lust of power, or gold, or land, or could be attributed justly to hate or vengefulness, the only notice which this Convention could properly take of it would be in the way of disapproval and condemnation," the report said.

"But the world has never witnessed such a situation as this in which our people are placed at this solemn and critical hour. Peace-loving, coveting nothing which belonged to Germany or her allies, living in good-will with all the peoples of the world, we are now challenged to use all the measureless resources of our country, that we may help to overcome, at any cost of blood or treasure, the hateful menace of German domination of the world."

If Germany prevailed, the report warned, "the whole world will thus fall into moral chaos."

Opposing the war

The war began on July 28, 1914, a month after the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungry and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, by a Yugoslav nationalist. Archduke Ferdinand's death provoked diplomatic maneuvers and threats that escalated tensions in Europe as both sides called on their allies for support.

Within weeks the world's economic powers were aligned in two opposing groups, with Germany and Austria-Hungry on one side and the United Kingdom, France, and Russia on the other. The massive conflict that erupted was known for years as The Great War, until World War II occurred and changed the naming protocol.





(ABOVE) OFF TO WAR — An unidentified minister baptizes World War I-era soldiers and others in the Trinity River at Camp Bowie in Fort Worth, just prior to their mobilization to Europe to fight what was known at the time as the Great War. **(AT RIGHT) MINISTERING TO TROOPS** — An unidentified minister prepares to lead a caravan of American soldiers at a military base to a church meeting during World War I. (Photos courtesy of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives)

The next four years saw 70 million military personnel mobilized for war and more than nine million soldiers killed, including over 100,000 U.S. soldiers after America's entry into the war in 1917.

Initially, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation of neutrality declaring the conflict was not America's business. Most Southern Baptists agreed.

The 1915 SBC adopted a resolution praising Wilson, a Presbyterian with a reputation for personal piety, for "the firm stand he has taken for the ideals of peace, and at the same time the requirements of international law."

The resolution was consistent with sentiments expressed in the SBC Social Service Commission's 1914 report, issued two months before the war began. "War, whether economic or political," the commission said, "is the enemy of the life of man, and the Christian Church is called to leadership in its ultimate abolition."

The Biblical Recorder in North Caroline editorialized in 1915, "We believe that the incessant talk of war is little short of a high crime against civilization." Similarly, Georgia Baptist's Christian Index news journal urged America to remain on good terms with all nations fighting the war.

Virginia Baptists recommended at their 1915 annual meeting that "the United States maintain, in act and in utterance, the tone and attitude of neutrality as to the belligerent nations."

Sentiment turns

During the war's first two years though, Germany repeatedly sunk passenger and cargo ships, some with Americans aboard. The Germans deemed such attacks necessary because the ships carried materials to be used in the war effort.

Wilson demanded in 1916 that Germany recognize the "incontrovertible rights of neutrals." He also asked the U.S. military to establish "reasonable preparedness" for war.

The military escalation made some Southern Baptists uneasy, with the Christian Index warning that if "preparedness" continued, Americans would "soon find ourselves involved in disastrous wars."

Baptists elsewhere likewise cautioned that military escalation might lead to war. One pastor wrote to the Alabama Baptist newsjournal asking Baptists to contact their Congressmen in protest of the "war madness which is about to sweep our country into a career similar to that which has deluged Europe in blood."

In January 1917, Germany announced unrestricted warfare against all shipping in volition of its pledge that no ocean liners would be sunk without warning and that the safely of all non-combatants would be guaranteed.

With Germany demonstrating a seemingly aggressive and autocratic impulse to control Europe, the U.S. declared war in April. Most Southern Baptists had come to believe that the use of military force was regrettably needed.

"Americans were very isolationist and didn't want to get involved in other people's conflicts," Lloyd Harsch, professor of church history at New Orleans Seminary, told BP, "but when the United States entered the war and understood that it was not just European powers fighting themselves but a war of the autocrats against liberty, then to stand for liberty was something that was necessary. As people who stood for religious liberty, there was a connection."

Accepting the war

Antiwar activists were few at the 1917 SBC annual meeting. A proposed resolution pledged to Wilson and the government "our loyal and sacrificial support in the war in which we are engaged."

When J. J. Taylor, a pastor from Savannah, Ga., spoke against the resolution and urged prayer for the enemy, other messengers shouted him down and the resolution was adopted. Taylor later resigned his pastorate after agreeing with the congregation that his pacifist views caused disruption in the church.

There have been "elements of pacifism" in the SBC, "but it's not very prominent in our heritage," Sumners said. The majority of Southern Baptists "are reluctant for this country to go to war but know that sometimes it's necessary."

J. B. Gambrell, president of the SBC in 1917 and a leader among Texas Baptists, wrote America had to enter the war to defend the New Testament principle of individual liberty from the "absolutism of the (German) Kaiser."

"We did not wish to go into the war; everything was done to keep out of it that could be done in honor," Gambrell wrote in The Baptist Standard, news journal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. "But, when Autocracy set out to bestride the world, the spirit of liberty was aroused, and America is in with the other great democracies, to fight the war out to a finish and make it possible for the people of the earth to come into the liberty wherewith Christ makes people free. It is pretty clear that in this conflict of ideas the best idea will win the field."

Gambrell, a Pontotoc native and Confederate veteran of the Civil War, founded The Baptist Record and served as editor from 1877-91. He also founded The Baptist Standard and served four terms as SBC president.

Challenges

At times the war effort presented Baptists with moral dilemmas. A 1918 Biblical Recorder article explained some wartime charities supported by Southern Baptists purchased cigarettes and hosted dances for soldiers.

The Recorder noted, "There has been a tremendous letting down in our attitude toward certain moral questions since the war began. Who would have dared suggest before the war that our preachers urge their people to give money to buy cigarettes for our boys, or to provide dances for their pleasure? ...Those things show a sub-normal state which the churches and preachers should set about correcting."

At other times Southern Baptists saw the war as an opportunity for evangelism. The convention voted unanimously in 1918 to assign all troop ministry to the Home Mission Board and urged the military to guarantee religious freedom for soldiers.

After the war

When World War I ended on Nov. 13, 1918, Baptists turned their attention to plans for establishing a League of Nations with most supporting it as an important peacekeeping tool. The war also led to an even more important discussion for the future of the SBC: how to reach the world for Christ.

Although the war was over, Southern Baptists' sense of triumphalism "continued with the idea that they wanted to win the world for Christ," Harsch said. "Within months of the end of the war, Baptists in the North and the South were putting together five-year campaigns to raise money for missions so that the Gospel could go to the ends of the earth."

The SBC's 75 Million Campaign, though it collected only about $58 million of its $75 million goal, showed Baptists the value of a unified fundraising effort for all of the convention's missions and ministries.

In 1925, the 75 Million Campaign was the basis for Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program (CP), which still serves as the convention's chief avenue for funding Kingdom work. In a sense, World War I helped spawn CP, Harsch said.



A Man of Few but Excellent Words

Dr. Bruce McIver was the pastor of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, for thirty years. It was a time of growth and blessings from God at the church and certainly in the life of Bruce McIver. After his active service as a pastor he reflected on the journey that he had been on through the years and wrote what amounted to the memoir of his life spent loving God and serving the Lord's people. On a personal level, one of the most significant moments he tells about was when he had heart surgery. Actually, it was his second heart surgery. He had coronary bypass surgery and now sixteen years later he was having difficulty and more blockages were discovered. With his buoyant great spirit he told the doctor, "The first lasted for sixteen years. I thought that was a good run so let's do it again and I ought to have sixteen more years." After extensive tests what he discovered was they could not do a second surgery. In fact the team of cardiologists that were looking at his reports told him he was going to just simply have to scale back, sit down and pretty much walk the rest of the journey gingerly and aware that he had serious heart problems that could not be fixed.

Not wanting to accept that diagnosis and certainly not wanting to sit down and do nothing for whatever years remained, he inquired further about whether there was some way or someone who he could go to or some other opinion that he might get. The doctors were all in agreement that it would be good for him to go and search for a second opinion at one of the finest heart facilities in the nation where one of the finest heart surgeons practiced. The pastor was thrilled to find that there might be someone who could help him and with the help of the folks on his local heart team they made connections and preparations to go.

The time came, he went, entered the hospital, had tests run and found that the doctor to whom he had been recommended specialized in second, even third, procedures. After studying all the tests the doctor agreed to do the second surgery. On the night before the surgery, the surgeon came in, told him everything was ready for the next day and as he was about to leave the room, the pastor asked the doctor, "Doc, can you fix it?" The doctor looked at him and with quiet confidence he softly spoke and said, "Sure," and he walked out. Bruce McIver said he could hardly go to sleep that night, not because he was anxious about the surgery, but he just kept hearing that skilled, confident doctor's words repeated over and over in his mind – Sure, Sure, Sure.

He finally went to sleep and woke up the next morning prepared to be taken to surgery even then remembering the only word that the doctor had said, "Sure." They began the surgery and it continued for about twelve hours and finally it was complete. He began to come off the support apparatus, would soon get up, begin the rehab and was about to get out of the hospital. He asked his doctor how everything was. He said, "Before I came in, the oxygen levels were down and everything else was down, but will I now have enough blood supply and oxygen supply? Will I have enough blood supply and oxygen supply to take care of me now?" The doctor who had told him, "Sure," looked at him and said, "You will have all you will ever need," and turned around and walked out.

Later, after he was out of the hospital and back at home in Texas, his wife told him of one other comment that the doctor had made. When the doctor came in after the surgery and was telling the family about the surgery, his wife said that she was so concerned about his quality of life. Her question was, "Will he have a good quality of life following this procedure?" The doctor, matter-of-factly, said to her, "I repaired his heart. The quality of life will be up to him." As the years passed by and he returned to a very active life and ministry, he filled his life with wonderful things and great experiences, but often reflected on the brief yet meaningful statements by the heart doctor. Looking back on them he began to put into place the significance of each one as though it would be what Jesus might say to us about our heart condition.

For whatever it is that we might bring to Him that is broken, malfunctioning or we have ruined and ask Him, "Lord, can you fix this," our Jesus is able to say to the worst and the neediest of us, "Sure." And then when we begin to wonder, "Well, could we keep on and live out this experience with the Lord? Will we have enough power, strength, blessings, love, hope?" And He says, "You will have all you ever need." But then when you and I begin to wonder about our quality of life, our significance in life, and maybe even ask Him, "Will I have a quality of life?" There's a sense in which He could reply to us, "I've repaired your heart. The quality of life will be up to you."

For sure our Lord wants to come and lead and bless us. He wants to fix us and favor us, but so much of what happens that gets us out of touch, out of contact and not experiencing the fullness of God's love is because of who we are and what we do and don't do. Trust Him and let Him take you and fill your life with blessings and you can indeed celebrate a quality of life that is abundant.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

College News

➤ Former University of Mississippi Chancellor Robert C. Khayat will be the speaker at the annual **William Carey University** Scholarship Dinner on Tuesday, Sept. 9. The event, now in its fourth year, raises money for student scholarships. More than 90% of Carey students receive some type of financial assistance and over $1.1 million has been raised through past dinners. Khayat was the 15th chancellor of Ole Miss, serving from 1995 until 2009. He is a former college football All-Star, All-Pro kicker for the Washington Redskins, law professor and president of the NCAA Foundation. He holds degrees from Ole Miss and Yale University and was an Academic All-American football and baseball player while at Ole Miss. Khayat has received the National Football League's Lifetime Achievement Award as well as the National Football Foundation Distinguished American Award. For more information or to buy tickets for the event, contact Lynne Houston at (601) 318-6231 or by email at lhouston@wmcarey.edu.

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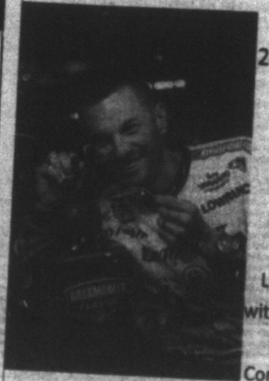
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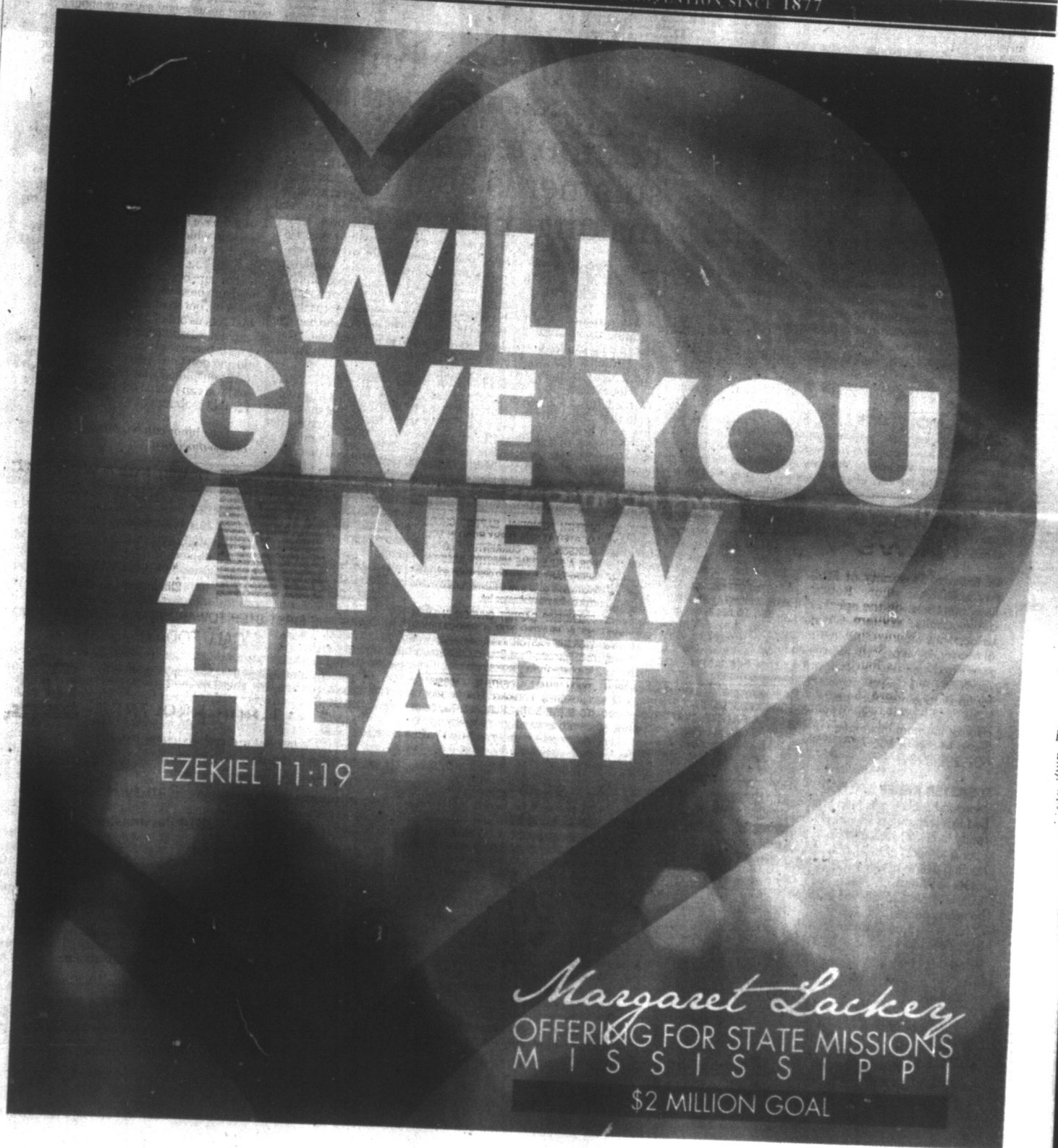
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August 14, 2014
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THE BaptistRecord

Special Edition

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877



MISSION VOLUNTEERS $675,000
More than 12,000 Mississippi Baptists participated in short-term missions last year. Margaret Lackey assists with scholarships for many of them. Your gifts help insure that our churches are connected to Southern Baptist missionaries around the world.
ACTION: A $300 gift reduces the airfare costs for volunteer missionaries.
CONTACT: Ken Rhodes at 800.748.1651 or 601.292.3239.

GARAYWA $380,000
Garaywa Camp and Conference Center provided missional training and inspiration for more than 6,500 persons last year. Over 1,300 girls attended Summer Camp and 15 made professions of faith in Christ.
ACTION: A $175 gift sends a youngster to camp.
CONTACT: Jessica Morrison at 601.924.7034.

CENTRAL HILLS $380,000
Campfires and outdoor challenges helped almost 5,000 campers rekindle their relationship to Christ at Central Hills last year. 390 decisions were recorded as a part of camp activities.
ACTION: A $100 gift will feed a horse for one year.
CONTACT: Jim Ray at 662.289.9730.

NEW CHURCH STARTS $175,000
Margaret Lackey gifts provide support for church planters in Mississippi who are engaging the lost and revitalizing the parent churches that partner with them. Pray for their effective witness among almost 2 million unchurched Mississippians.
ACTION: A $100 gift provides a gospel coach for planters.
CONTACT: Johnny Ervin at 800.748.1651 or 601.292.3361.

COMMUNITY MISSION PROJECTS $175,000
Margaret Lackey grants help fund locally designed mission projects in communities and associations all across our state. Associational Mission Directors help identify community needs and facilitate the grant writing.
ACTION: A $100 gift covers refreshments for an evangelistic block party.
CONTACT: Talk to your local mission director for more information or call David Michel at 800.748.1651 or 601.292.3231.

DISASTER RELIEF $60,000
Margaret Lackey gifts help train certified first responders so that we are ready to clear roads and hang tarps after a tornado or hurricane. Annual training events at Central Hills help insure readiness.
ACTION: A $25 gift will feed ten homeless people.
CONTACT: Don Gann at 800.748.1651 or 601.292.3335.

MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS



COMMUNITY MISSION PROJECTS

For 160 teenagers, summer is about making difference

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

More than 12,000 students made a decision this summer to pay money out of their own pockets in order to help improve living conditions of people across the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, and they did it all in the name of Jesus Christ.

More than 160 students from eight churches worked July 21-25 on a variety of assignments in Tupelo that ranged from painting houses to putting siding on a house. They were part of World Changers, an initiative of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville. They were partnered locally with the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

"The work is going pretty good," said Brandon Slaughter, a senior from First Church in Bonne Terre, Mo. "This is my second World Changer project. We were in Henderson, Kentucky, last year. I just like helping people, sharing the Gospel. There are a lot of lost people out there who need to see Jesus."

The crew at this particular worksite was painting the home of London McKinney, replacing columns on the porch and a door.

"I felt led to come," said Katie Rogers, from Forest Avenue Church in Jackson, Al. A college freshman working on her first World Changers project, she said, "I feel like I should go into missions. That's one of the things I've been praying about, so I came even though a lot of my friends weren't coming.

"I was looking forward to making friends from other churches but what I expected wasn't anything like this. It's been amazing."

"We got to chop down a bush with a machete, and use a chain saw," said a grinning Slaughter.

"We've had some extra lunches and we've been able to share those with some of the neighborhood kids who've been walking around. We've handed out some Bibles, too," Rogers added.

"It's been great, helping the homeowner out," said Caleb Welborn, from First Church, Corning, Ar. "It's awesome. I sure am glad I came instead of sitting around the house. I've gotten to share the love of Jesus. I have several missionaries in my family, and this is just a lot better than talking about missions."

"It really humbles you," said Dustin Knoche, also from Corning. "It helps you get closer to God while you're helping someone else."

McKinney, the homeowner, said, "These kids are doing a very good job repairing my house. I sure do appreciate what they are doing."

On average, participating students pay $250 of their own money to take part in the week. This summer, 90 World Changers projects took place in more than 85 cities. In its 23rd year of operation, World Changers assists cities across North America to alleviate substandard housing.

> "It really humbles you. It helps you get closer to God while you're helping someone else."
>
> **Dustin Knoche**
> **First Church, Corning, Ar.**

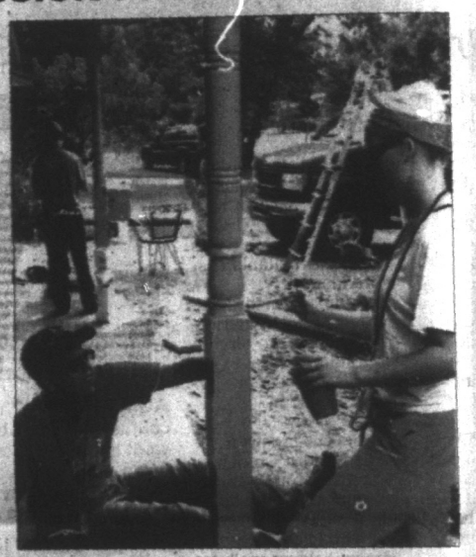
Projects in Tupelo included wheelchair ramps and landscaping. Groups came from Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Missouri, and Louisiana. They were lodged at First Church, Tupelo.

This is World Changers' seventh year in Tupelo. They are working in cooperation with Lee County Association. Funding from the City of Tupelo pays for the supplies used for repairs and construction. In Tupelo, there were 16 crews at 18 worksites.

"I'm not here to make myself feel good," said Knoche. "I'm here for God. We sure don't want to be the center of attention. There's a saying we've heard: 'GGTG.' That means 'Give God the Glory.' That's what we want to do."

Since 1990, more than 300,000 students and adults have participated in World Changers.

The Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering helps support World Changers with special funding available through the Lee Association.



ALL FOR CHRIST — Brandon James (left) from Forest Avenue Church in Jackson, Al., and Mackenzie Rawson from First Church, Bonne Terre, Mo., paint a newly installed porch column at the home of London McKinney in Tupelo. The pair were part of a World Changers project supported in part with funds from the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering available through Lee Association. (Photo by Tony Martin)



CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRIES

Rankin Co. trustees learn job skills

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor



A HAND UP — The first class of graduates from the Jobs for Life course, offered at the Rankin County Detention Center in Brandon, went through a special ceremony July 7. Teachers Mary and Roy Callahan, co-directors of Hands UP Outreach, are at left. Rankin County Sheriff Bryan Bailey (right) congratulates eight of the 11 graduates of the class who were present. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Roy and Mary Callahan are co-directors of Hands UP Outreach, a companion ministry to the Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) and the Christian Men's Job Corps (CMJC), all ministries of Rankin Association in Brandon.

Thanks to funding from the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering, the Callahans were able to teach a 12-weeek job training course to the trustees at the Rankin County Detention Center in Brandon.

The Jobs for Life course the Callahans taught is designed to instill life and work readiness skills, which they say not only prepares course graduates for work but also helps them build a healthy life. Eleven men graduated from Jobs for Life on July 7, in a special ceremony held especially for them at the detention center.

Rankin County Sherriff Bryan Bailey, who attended the graduation, spoke highly of the ministry.

"It warms my heart to see y'all continue on forward," Bailey told the graduates. "They say that if you aren't learning, you're dying. Scripture says that the Kingdom of God is here and now. He lives in us, and He lives in you."

Later, Bailey said, "Used to be, my attitude in law enforcement was, 'Let's arrest them all, lock them up, throw away the key, and go out and get some more,' but I heard a preacher say in his sermon once that sin is sin, and the only difference in their sin and my sin is that their sin caused them to get locked up. We're all sinners.

"We had some guys and one girl who wanted to start a new life. We began working with what we call 'blue suit trustees.' That's as high as you can get here in the sheriff's office as far as inmates are concerned. We keep around 12 of those out of hundreds. For them, the inside trustees, we offer this program. These individuals want to do good. They just need the tools."

Mary Callahan shared about the program itself. "Hands UP Outreach started in Rankin County about eight years ago. We moved here from Kentucky, and I wanted to get involved in ministry with hurting women. I was given the opportunity to go into jails and prisons here in the county. When I went, I knew that this was where God wanted me.

"This is the first class of men with which I've been involved because I've been working with women at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility and at the Flowood satellite, and at the jail," Callahan said.

"The curriculum we used with this class here was called 'Jobs for Life.' The class actually falls under Hands UP Outreach. My husband was using the CMJC program here, and so the job training was all about helping the men learn how to fill out an application, write a resume...

"We did an assessment on them to see in what kind of job they would be good. Employers asked us to teach them honesty and integrity. They said, 'We can teach them to answer the phone. We can teach them how to do any kind of widget, but it's what's inside that counts.'

"We wanted to work with our inmates, but we wanted their insides to be changed before their outsides could be changed. Without the funds we get from the state mission offering, we wouldn't be able to offer this program."

Inmate John Scales praised the program. "I've worked in maintenance most of my life. I got married at an early age, then divorced at an early age. I mostly worked for myself, as an electrician.

"I've been in the jail here for 16 months. I've been a blue suit since I've been here, running errands for the sheriff's office, but I do most of the upkeep on the grounds and other maintenance and electrical work.

"This class has helped me with self-discipline. It's helped me learn how to make wiser choices and to overcome the roadblocks and obstacles that have been in my life that have put me in the situation I'm in now.

"When I get out of here, I'm going to take it one day at a time. Whatever way God leads me, I'm going to follow Him."

Antonio Murillo is equally as complementary. "I was born in Massachusetts. We lived in Texas, then Michigan, then here to Rankin County. I got into drugs at a young age. When I was 18, I went to a fire academy and an EMT school, but I made bad choices. I've been here for 402 days.

"This class helped me get out of the idea that I'll never amount to anything. EMS meant everything to me, but this program showed me that there are other opportunities out there."

Roy Callahan said, "I began to sense that the ministry was getting bigger and needed to move to a larger level, so we did some assessments of the ministry and I stepped outside my work at Briar Hill Church to do this full-time.

"We have to raise our own support, but without Margaret Lackey (State Mission Offering) we wouldn't be able to do this or other classes we're offering."

CRIMINAL JUSTICE MINISTRIES $60,000
From Parchman to your county jail, Margaret Lackey provides Bible studies and recovery courses for a Mississippi offender population of more than 75,000.
ACTION: A $20 gift purchases Celebrate Recovery materials.
CONTACT: Charles Jones at 662.721.0264 or John Henry at 601.508.0293.

COLLEGE OUTREACH $20,000
The whole world has come to Mississippi on our college campuses. Margaret Lackey helps to fund student interns who work in ethnic evangelism and international student ministries.
ACTION: A $25 gift provides a Chinese language Bible.
CONTACT: Weaver McCracken at 800.748.1651 or 601.292.3302.

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S/ CHRISTIAN MEN'S JOB CORPS® $20,000
Twenty-two percent of Mississippi's population lives below the poverty line. Sometimes job preparation and Christian encouragement can transform a family's economic and spiritual standing. Job Corps offers that ministry through almost 20 different sites across the state.
ACTION: A $15 gift provides a "Jobs for Life" workbook.
CONTACT: Tammy Anderson at 800.748.1651 or 601.292.3323.

CROSS CULTURAL EVANGELISM $20,000
Mississippi Baptists worship in seven different languages every Sunday. Preparing spiritual leaders among our Choctaw, Hispanic, Chinese, Korean, and African-American neighbors brings God's Kingdom to fulfillment within our state.
ACTION: A $15 gift provides a Bible training course in Spanish.
CONTACT: David Michel at 800.748.1651 or 601.292.3231.

LANGUAGE/DEAF MINISTRY $20,000
Margaret Lackey makes sure that our non-reading and non-hearing neighbors have access to the gospel. Your gifts provide training for more than 100 leaders of ESL, ARW, and Chronological Bible Storying ministries located in over 50 churches across the state.
ACTION: A $15 gift purchases a "Good News" workbook for English Language Learners.
CONTACT: Paula Smith at 800.748.1651 or 601.292.3336 for Language Ministry, or Jim Booth at 601.201.3361 for Deaf Ministry.

PORT MINISTRY $15,000
Mississippi hospitality and gospel witness are the currency of our Port Ministry centers. Over 7,000 seafarers visit our state every year and many meet Jesus while they are here. Pray that they will take Him home with them.
ACTION: A $5 gift buys the Jesus Video.
CONTACT: Adrian Turner at 228.623.0103 for Pascagoula Ministry, and Steve Mooneyham at 228.932.4311 for Gulfport Ministry.

SEASON OF PRAYER FOR STATE MISSIONS AUGUST-OCTOBER

CHANGE MY HEART OH GOD...

From closed to receptive | From critical to compassionate | From dull to responsive | From distracted to devoted | From self-centered to generous

MAKE IT EVER NEW...

Awakened by your Spirit's conviction | Strengthened by your Spirit's power | Submissive to your Spirit's direction
Faithful to your Spirit's mission | Refreshed by your Spirit's presence

MAKE US MORE LIKE YOU...

With hearts encouraged by hope | With hearts burdened for the lost
With hearts focused on spiritual renewal | With hearts unified in mission response
With hearts overflowing in generosity and thanksgiving

First Person: Back to School with Margaret Lackey State Missions

By David Michel
Correspondent

My grandson started back to school just a couple of days ago. He's in the second grade and of course, knows everything. He informed me that, "School is boring!" But he's been anxious all summer waiting to see if he would be assigned to his preferred teacher. And the night before class started, he could hardly sleep because of the new friends and adventures he might discover.

Sometimes Baptists are like school kids. We pretend boredom, but at heart level are really excited about missions. The Margaret Lackey State Missions Emphasis always coincides with back-to-school time. Often we hear the protest, "Oh, no! Not another offering!" or "Not another mission study!" Yet deep inside we know that the heart of God is missional. He sent his "only begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Because God's heart is missional, we know that the best expression of faithfulness on our part must be missional too.

The 2014 Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering theme is about receiving a new heart for missions. Through the Prophet Ezekiel, God declares: "I will give you a new heart!" We can receive that gift by praying: Lord, give us hearts energized by Your Spirit, unified in missions, and characterized by generosity.

The Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering provides a means through which we can fulfill God's will and have our hearts renewed. The offering trains and send volunteer missionaries, prepares first responders for disaster relief, goes into jailhouses with the Gospel of freedom, engages lost people through community evangelism projects, and baptizes new believers through summer camps, church starts, and language missions. There is no more effective or more comprehensive approach to winning Mississippi to Jesus than through Margaret Lackey State Missions.

AND I WILL GIVE THEM ONE HEART AND PUT A NEW SPIRIT WITHIN THEM; I WILL REMOVE THEIR HEART OF STONE ... AND GIVE THEM A HEART OF FLESH, SO THEY MAY FOLLOW MY STATUTES AND KEEP MY ORDINANCES IN OBEDIENCE. THEN THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE, AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD.

EZEKIEL 11:19-21 AND I WILL GIVE THEM ONE HEART AND PUT A NEW SPIRIT WITHIN THEM; I WILL REMOVE THEIR HEART OF STONE ... AND GIVE THEM A HEART OF FLESH

The missional needs in Mississippi are growing more urgent every year. Although membership in Mississippi Baptist churches (663,000) represents almost 25% of the state's population, only 8.4% of the population (approximately 220,000) actually participate in church activities on a monthly basis. Baptisms per year have declined from an average of 15,000 to only 11,000.

African-American population projections in Mississippi are moving toward 50% of the total, yet less than 40 black churches identify with Southern Baptists. Growing numbers of retiring boomers and next-generation thirty-somethings are choosing to disassociate with our churches, and the expanding Hispanic population is largely influenced by Pentecostalism. The Kingdom challenges are great, and we need to discover a "new heart" for missions.

The appeal for generosity toward reaching a two million dollar goal for the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering is only the beginning. Dollars and cents fund training and support for state missionaries, but the more realistic goal of the offering is to develop hearts filled with missional urgency in the face of lostness. If we reach that goal, we will never be overwhelmed by boredom, but rather have hearts energized by Christ.

This year's promotional resources provide video and printed information to encourage clearer understanding of state mission opportunities. Order the resources to use in your church emphasis, interpret them to your congregation, and receive and encourage an offering that reflects your heart's commitment to Christ.

Michel is MBCB associate executive director for missions strategy.

ORDER PROMOTIONAL RESOURCES

THEME POSTER
Order several and display them on bulletin boards, in classrooms, hallways, and the fellowship center.

MARGARET LACKEY VIDEO RESOURCES
The DVD/CD contains three different emphases:
» A 90-second state missions overview.
» A 3-minute music video to use as a mission-focused offering time.
» Four 5-minute video-driven prayer sessions to use during mid-week services or small group mission studies. The videos introduce missionaries and projects that are representative of the Margaret Lackey Offering.
» Print art and other resources are included on the CD portion of the disk.

OFFERING GUIDE
Order enough for every member to receive one. The guide is a call to prayer and a description of what your gifts will accomplish. Distribute them at worship as a bulletin insert or mail them to every family.

OFFERING ENVELOPE
Order enough for every member. Place them in the offering plates or distribute them as bulletin inserts. Make extras available in the church foyer, offices, and classrooms.

To order FREE promotional resources

601-292-3231 or
800.748.1651

www.mbcb.org/statemissions

Just for the Record



Members of **WANILLA CHURCH, MONTICELLO,** conducted a teacher outreach event by collecting supplies most requested by teachers of New Hebron Attendance Center. When the supplies were delivered, the church also provided a pizza lunch for all faculty and staff. The event concluded by church members having a special prayer in front of the school. Shown are Dorothy Jackson, Gladys Tyrone, Elaine Letchworth, Malcolm Rogers, NHAC principal Christie Alexander, Marcus Killingsworth, pastor Lee Faler, and Jordan Faler.



The WMU of **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG,** are shown working on an afghan crocheted by various ladies of the church to earn money for the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering.



Several men from **CENTER HILL CHURCH, HAMILTON,** attended the Gridiron Conference in June. Terry Edwards, pastor.



FIRST CHURCH, COLLINSVILLE, ordained Mike Dunehew and Hank Fairchild as deacons July 27. Shown are Dunehew on left with his wife, Charoltte, and Fairchild on right with his wife, Amy.

The RA's and GA's of **FIRST CHURCH, CHICORA,** delivered cleaning supplies they had collected to the Baptist Children's Village in Waynesboro. This was one of many mission projects they completed this year.





FIRST CHURCH, FOXWORTH, ordained Marcus Smith as deacon June 22. Shown are Theresa Smith, Smith, pastor Dane Hodges, and deacon chairman Reggie Turnage.



The Girls in Action of **BRANCH CHURCH, SCOTT COUNTY ASSOCIATION,** participated in a Mission Emphasis day. One of the day's activities included cookie cooking lessons from Chef Skip Davis. The cookies were given to local school cafeteria workers.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

NOBTS undergrad extension classes starting August 18

NEW ORLEANS (Special) — New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) is offering undergraduate classes through the Leavell College Extension Center's Jackson Center at Broadmoor Church in Madison. The following classes will meet on Mondays, starting August 18.

- Introduction to Ministry, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Taught by John Pace, pastor of First Church, Terry (three hours credit).
- Integrating Academics and Ministry, 1 - 4 p.m. Taught by David Michel, associate executive director for mission strategy at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson (three hours credit).
- Old Testament Survey, 4 - 7 p.m. Taught by David Champagne, assistant professor for Christian Studies and Philosophy at Mississippi College in Clinton (three hours credit).

Through the extension program NOBTS offers accredited, affordable theological training, allowing students access to high quality seminary education without relocating. Through the Jackson Center, students can obtain an associate in Christian ministry degree and/or a bachelor's degree.

NOBTS offers classes in a variety of formats that allow students to cater their schedule to meet their needs. Students can combine classes at the extension center with online classes, workshops, conference-based courses, and hybrid courses to obtain degree requirements.

To see the cycle of classes offered, as well as other important information about the extension center, vist nobts.edu/Extensions/LAMSCenters/Jackson1.html.

For more information or to start the application and enrollment process, visit the seminary web site at nobts.edu, or contact John Pace, Jackson Extension Center director, at (601) 559-9352. E-mail: thepacepack@aol.com. Norris Grubbs, regional dean for Louisiana and Mississippi, can also be contacted toll-free at (800) NOBTS-01, ext. 3301. E-mail: lmextasst@nobts.edu.

Bivocational music course now enrolling

JACKSON, Ms. (Special) — The fifth of an eight-course series for bivocational music ministers is currently open for enrollment at five locations in Mississippi.

The course, Songs and Hymns for Worship, will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks at the following locations and times (the Brookhaven location meets on Saturday):

- First Church, Cleveland, beginning August 18 (6-8 p.m.). Alan Berry, teacher (662) 843-2701.
- First Church, Marion, began August 11 (6:30 - 8:30 p.m.). Buddy McElroy, teacher (601) 938-8668.
- Easthaven Church, Brookhaven, beginning August 16 (9 a.m. - noon). Mark Hamilton, teacher (601) 835-6607.
- First Church, Booneville, beginning August 19 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). LuAnne Ford, teacher, (662) 728-6272.
- Handsboro Church, Gulfport, beginning August 19 (7 - 9 p.m.). Louis White, Teacher, (228) 860-9616.

There is a one-time enrollment fee of $25.00. The cost of each course is $100. A $60 scholarship is available for all first-time students. Students already enrolled are not eligible. The grant is limited to one person per church.

The eight courses are Basic Conducting; Worship/Worship Planning; Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch; Reading Music: Harmony/Melody; Songs and Hymns for Worship; Building Your Music Ministry; Church Music Resources; Class Voice.

These courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches, and are sponsored by the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in cooperation with the Providence Learning Center of New Orleans Seminary.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a certificate from the Providence Learning Center of New Orleans Seminary.

For more information, contact the teachers listed above or Slater Murphy, MBCB director of church music, at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3276 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 276. E-mail: smurphy@mbcb.org.

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1-800-844-3254

BBB

STAFF WANTED
Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries
- Houseparent couples for the Baptist Home for Children, Monticello, Ark. These full-time positions include salary, medical insurance, life insurance and paid leave. Contact: Randy Luper, 870.367.5358 or rluper@abchomes.org.

www.abchomes.org abc

BiBLiOCiPHER

LHNR LERMRDXMR SX LEXZCEL DXM LER UXMMXY: DXM LER UXMMXY PEHTI LHNR LEXZCEL DXM LER LEVSCP XD VLPRTD. PZDDVWVRSL ZSLX LER AHK VP LER RBVT LERMRXD.

UHLLERY PVQ: LEVMLK-DXZM

Clue: F = B

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Haggai 2:5

By Charles Marx, 1932–2004, © 2005

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Truth is not relative.
Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:
1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)
"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)
If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Radical Faith: Never Give Up on Prayer • *Daniel 6:3-7, 10, 16-23*

Daniel served the Lord faithfully through four different kings, two Babylonian and two Persian. He represented The Lord to Nebuchadnezzar and then to King Belshazzar. After Cyrus led the Persians to defeat the Babylonians, he turned this part of the kingdom over to King Darius. Daniel served the Lord regardless of who was on the throne.

Daniel served the Lord first and then he served whoever was in authority. His devotion to God showed in his words and actions and were recorded in the book of Daniel. In the first chapter Daniel distinguished himself before King Nebuchadnezzar by his choice of food and drink. In the second chapter he correctly interpreted the King's dream. Daniel interpreted another dream of the King in Daniel the fourth chapter. In the fifth chapter Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall for King Belshazzar. In each case he stood strong for his personal belief in God and witnessed of God's great majesty to the Babylonian kings.

Just as Israel was defeated by Babylon, Babylon was then defeated by the Persians. As the Jews were forced to serve the Babylonians, the Babylonians were then forced to serve the Persians. Daniel, however served the Lord first, so whomever was in charge saw this in him.

God blessed Daniel under the new King Darius and he rose to second in the entire kingdom. As often happens in politics, some of the other leaders were jealous and attempted to remove him, but they could find nothing wrong that he did. They knew that Daniel prayed regularly so they enticed Darius to decree that for thirty days no one could pray to anyone but him or be fed to hungry lions.



These unnamed conspirators used the pride of the King to trap Daniel. They appealed to Darius' ego to trick him into making this decree that he later regretted. As skilled politicians, they worded the document in such a way that even the King could not renounce it.

Daniel heard the decree and yet continued to pray three times a day to the one true God as he had always done. These unnamed conspirators sprung their trap and reported this to King Darius. The king had no choice but to keep his word and to throw Daniel into the lions' den. This grieved King Darius. Daniel 6:14 reads, "Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he labourd till the going down of the sun to deliver him, (KJV). King Darius said to Daniel before he had him thrown into the lions' den, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee, (Daniel 6:16 KJV).

King Darius did not sleep at all that night as he grieved over Daniel situation. The next morning he came to the area of the lions' den and cried out to see if Daniel were still there. "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?, (Daniel 6:20 KJV).

Daniel answered that God had shut the mouth of the lions and then he proclaimed his innocence before God Almighty and also before King Darius.

Because of the life and the legacy of Daniel, King Darius realized that Daniel was innocent and he had Daniel removed from the lions' den. He then had his unnamed conspirators thrown into the lions' den along with their wives and children. The Scripture says they were destroyed before they hit the ground. Daniel's faith and trust in God resulted in a decree from King Darius, "That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end," (Daniel 6:26 KJV).

Daniel continued to serve the Lord through four different administrations of government. Regardless of who is in the presidency of this country, governor of this state, or who is your boss, the Lord is your God. People notice when you serve the Lord.

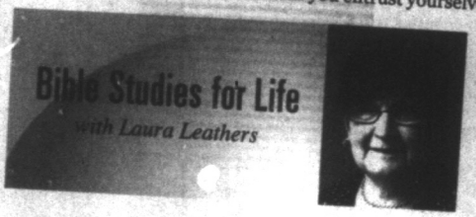
Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.

Victorious Faith • *1 Peter 5:6-11*

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission recently interviewed David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills, on the reality of persecution and the global church. Pastor Platt stated it was humbling to see brothers and sisters in Christ who are facing different levels of persecution. This persecution comes from government, underground settings, social persecution, families, as well as other sources. He further stated those who are Christ Followers are and will be persecuted for emulating Him here in the United States as well as other countries. Scripture states it clearly, "Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12) or "will suffer persecution" (NJKV). Additionally in Matthew 10:5-42 Jesus warned His disciples about persecution.

Persecution of the Believers would go on for the almost 200 years after Peter wrote his letters. In the first five verses of 1 Peter 5, he speaks of the importance of having elders to shepherd the flock. These were men who were spiritually mature and would be able to see others through the fiery trials. The elder was to be an example to the flock and all were to be clothed with humility toward one another." (vs. 5). "True humility is described in Philippians 2:1-11. Humility is not demeaning ourselves and thinking poorly of ourselves. It is simply not thinking of ourselves at all!" (Warren Wiersbe, Be Hopeful, page 135).

Today's lesson encourages us to sharpen our focus on three admonitions so we can walk in victorious faith, thereby glorifying God in and through the fiery trials. The first is to submit, first to God and then to others. Submission is an act of faith. Ultimately we are trusting God to direct our lives with His plan and in His timing. And we do so by placing ourselves "under the mighty hand of God." This was an Old Testament symbol of the power of God working (Ex. 3:19, 20; Job 30:20, 21). God will exalt us when it is His wisely appointed time.



Another aspect of submission is casting. "It means 'throwing or placing upon' and it requires the deliberate release of control and the intentional placement of worries and concerns 'upon God'. The only other occurrence of this word in the New Testament provides a vivid illustration—the disciples' 'throwing their robes on the donkey' Jesus was about to ride into Jerusalem (Lk. 19:35). God is not indifferent to your sufferings. He desires that you cast not some, but all of your care upon Him. The anxieties that trouble your hearts and minds, the fears tied to your past, present and future circumstances, are all to be cast at His feet as you entrust yourselves to His tender care" (Women's Evangelical Commentary by Patterson & Kelley, pg. 837). Faith is built upon our view of God. If our view is faulty then our faith is weak. Do I believe God and trust the sufficiency of the Scriptures?

The second admonition is to be on the alert or watchful. We have an adversary, his name is Satan and he is seeking someone to devour. The father of lies can appear when you least expect it. Therefore we need to learn to recognize him and daily put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20) so that "you will be able to stand firm against the scheme of the devil". Therefore stand firm in your faith and what you know is truth. He is prowling! He is attacking everyone! And the body of Christ is being attacked throughout the world. You might consider reading Jerry Rankin's book entitled Spiritual Warfare, The Battle for God's Glory.

In the final section of today's lesson, 1 Peter 5:10-11, we need to remember our present suffering is only for a little while, therefore the third admonition is be hopeful. Notice this is the second time Peter has used the word 'all' in the focal passage. Put the two verses together: "Cast all your cares upon the God of all grace." Done! Finished! And while you are casting, God is perfecting your character, confirming His work through you, and strengthening you through persecution. One day God will ultimately remove all suffering and fully restore you. In Peter's crescendo, verse 11, we are called 'to His eternal glory in Christ'.

"Jesus is Victor!" was Corrie ten Boom's favorite phrase. This should be ours as well. It is in His conquering name we can sing, "Faith is the victory, Faith is the victory! O glorious victory, that overcomes the world." (Faith is the Victory, written by John H. Yates).

Leathers is a member of First Church, Madison.

IRAQ

cont. from p.1

He said his parents, six brothers, sister, and grandmother are among those stranded in the Sinjar Mountains. "I don't know if they are still alive or not. The mountain is surrounded by ISIS. They cannot move anywhere."

Abdo spoke to his sister by cell phone earlier that day, but believes she is trying to protect him from the truth about his family's situation. "She's not going to tell me my brothers are dying. She's told me, 'We are okay,' but I know they are not okay," he said.

IMB has requested prayer for the crisis in Iraq, and specifically for the Iraqi Christian and Yazidi Kurdish refugees:

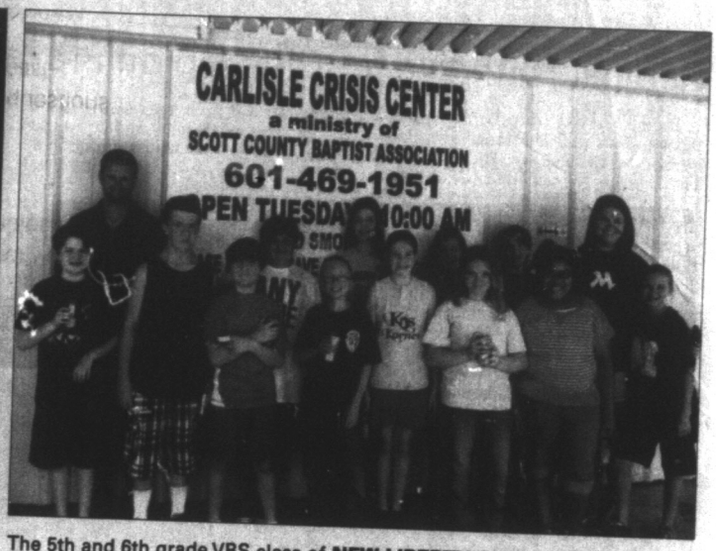
- Ask the Lord to awaken the world to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Iraq and to provide pathways for Christians and others to respond.
- Ask God to miraculously protect the Yazidis and other Kurds who fled into the mountains. Ask Him to provide a means of rescue and temporary homes for the refugees.
- Pray that ISIS leaders and soldiers would experience the love of Jesus Christ and that their lives would be transformed.
- Ask God to preserve and embolden the small remnant of believers in Mosul and Kurdistan so that one day through their witness, every Iraqi might have the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

For more information on ongoing Baptist relief efforts, visit imb.org and gobgr.org.

Vacation Bible School

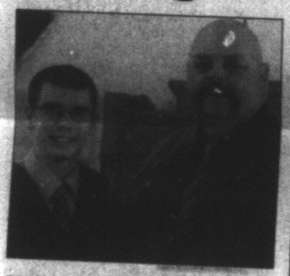


CONCORD CHURCH, BENTON-TIPPAH ASSOCIATION: July 7 – 11; enrollment, 50; family night, July 13; Debbie Kennedy, director; Robert E. Walker, pastor.



The 5th and 6th grade VBS class of **NEW LIBERTY CHURCH, MORTON,** recently worked at the Carlisle Crisis Center, a ministry of the Scott County Association. The children stocked food pantry shelves, worked in the clothes closet, and cleaned to help prepare for clients. Dax Fairchild and Jessica Turner, leaders.

Staff Changes



NORTH MCCOMB CHURCH, MCCOMB, called Jamie Caves as minister to students in March. He is shown with pastor Jess Greer.

Other Staff Changes:

➤ **Murphy Creek Church, Louisville,** has called Mark Mayo as pastor. He comes with his wife, Darla, and children Hunter and Olivia Grace.

Revivals & Homecomings

➤ **Spring Hill Church, Waterford:** Revival, Aug. 17 – 20; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. – Wed., 7 p.m.; Phil Glisson, speaker; Mark Manning, music; John Parker, pastor.

➤ **Pulaski Church, Pulaski:** Homecoming and 120th anniversary, Aug. 17; music with Victory Bound, 10 a.m.; services, 11 a.m., followed by potluck lunch; Bob Smith, speaker.

➤ **Concord Church, Choctaw:** Revival, Aug. 18 – 20, 7 p.m.; Tim Black, speaker; Joe & Mary Curtis Thompson, music; Roger Griffith, pastor.

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Is your Bible Study for Preschoolers and Children healthy?

Live Training Web Casts

CHILDREN'S Leadership
Thursday, September 18

PRESCHOOL Leadership
Thursday, November 13

6:30-8:00 P.M.

Hosted and led by Mississippi Sunday School Leaders along with a panel of local ministry leaders AND

September 18: Bill Emeott, Lead Kids Ministry Specialist, LifeWay Christian Resources

November 13: Clara Mae Van Brink, Preschool Ministry Speaker, Canton, Georgia

Discussion of Issues and Needs in Preschool and Children Ministry Using the Bible to Help Everything Be Right

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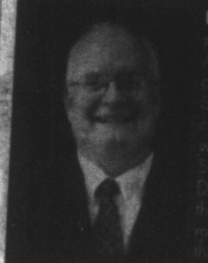
DEUTERONOMY

A CHALLENGE FOR A NEW GENERATION

JANUARY BIBLE STUDY PREVIEW CLINIC

SEPTEMBER 8, 2014
SKYROOM, 4TH FLOOR
MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION BOARD, JACKSON
REGISTRATION: 8:30 – 9 a.m.
PREVIEW STUDY: 9 a.m. – noon

Lunch will be provided to attendees by your Mississippi Baptist Foundation. Must register by August 25th.



Dr. Wayne VanHorn has served as pastor of interim pastor in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. He has taught at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, William Carey University, and currently teaches at Mississippi College where he also serves as Dean of the School of Christian Studies and the Art. Dr. VanHorn and his wife Tonya have three children and four grandchildren. His major discipline of study is in Hebrew and the Old Testament.

REGISTER BY AUGUST 25
by emailing Carolyn Day at cday@mbcb.org
or call 1-800-748-1651, ext 291
or 601-292-3291

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